

Presseberichte

2. Zagreber Sicherheitskonferenz



Zagreb, 22. November 2016



Ministerpräsident Andrej Plenkovic



Innenminister Orepic



Verteidigungsminister Kristicevic

PM Plenkovic and German Ambassador Schultze Open Annual Security Conference

Tuesday HRT online edition

<http://tinyurl.com/hrwe5ry>

Tuesday JUTARNJI LIST online edition

<http://tinyurl.com/jxn2kwr>

PM Plenkovic and German Ambassador to Croatia Schultze open the 2nd International Security Conference in Zagreb on Tuesday, where terrorism, the migrant crisis, hybrid warfare and internal problems such as corruption were said to be the main threats to Croatia's national security. Plenkovic stated that the creation of a new National Security Strategy is one of the Government's priorities.



Dt. Botschafter Schultze

□ Prime Minister **Andrej Plenkovic** and German Ambassador to Croatia **Thomas Eberhard Schultze** opened on Tuesday the 2nd International Security Conference in Zagreb, co-sponsored by the Croatian Statehood Foundation (**ZHDZ**) and the Croatian branch of **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)**, at which speakers and participants in panel discussions mostly agreed that terrorism, the refugee and illegal migrant [[collectively, "migrants"]] crisis, hybrid warfare, corruption, radicalization and a negative demographic image are the greatest areas of threat to the security of Croatia, Croatian media report.

Plenkovic said in his comments that one of the Government's priorities is the creation of a new National Security Strategy and drafting a proposed Law on Homeland Security, and that he will make an effort to ensure those needs are reflected as much as realistically possible in the state budget for 2017, HRT reports. "Croatia is currently trying to get out of the [[European Commission's]] excessive budget deficit procedure, which is why it is not easy to set aside 2% [[of the GDP]] for defense," explained Plenkovic. He acknowledged that "this is the ambition," and that is what the United States (**US**) is asking of the other members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (**NATO**).

Schultze asserted the need to protect the common borders and a unique migrant policy is required to do so - and that public confidence in the project of the European Union (**EU**) needs to be restored, HRT reports.

Executive Director of the Center for International Studies (**CMS**) **Mladen Nakic** was moderator for the first panel discussion, and he mentioned the results of a survey conducted by the European Parliament (**EP**) in which it was shown that Europeans consider the fight against terrorism to be the EU's most important priority, HRT reports.

Interior Minister **Vlaho Orepic** expressed his hope that in the future the word "security" will no longer be associated with repression, and he emphasized that threat assessments need to be based on knowledge and facts, because they can otherwise lead to manipulation, polarization and radicalization. "Because of the migrant crisis we do not see other security threats, such as corruption or unfavorable demographic trends," stated Orepic, HRT reports.

Former Defense Minister **Davor Bozinovic** expressed his belief that there is a global proliferation of security challenges, and that the EU is trying to face new problems using only the "old tools that are available to them," HRT reports.

Demographer **Stjepan Sterc** of the Faculty of Science at the University of Zagreb warned that things are very serious in relation to the migration crisis, and pointed out that EU demographics experts predict 400 million people will be venturing towards Europe within the next 30 years. Nevertheless, Sterc feels the greatest threat to Croatia's security is its catastrophic demographic situation and the Government's failure to react to it, HRT reports.

In his introduction of the second panel discussion, which was focused on the threat of terrorism, Defense Minister **Damir Krsticevic** said that the Government is aware of the complexity of terrorism and the necessity of a unified approach to combating it. Krsticevic believes that the current biggest problem of the Croatian security system is the poor level of coordination between the relevant state institutions, and he assured that the Government has begun the process of defining and establishing a system for domestic security, HRT reports.

Meanwhile, five Iranian migrants between the ages of 25 and 31 were found on Monday morning by the police in Konavle, a small municipality in Dubrovnik-Neretva County, after they illegally entered Croatia from Montenegro, where they will be returned, and are banned from entering Croatia for two-years. Two of the migrants had Iranian travel documents, and the other three had no documents, JUTARNJI LIST reports.

Government to Increase Defence Budget for 2017

By Vedran Pavlic, 22 Nov 2016, 17:25 PM [Politics](#)



Prime Minister Andrej Plenković confirmed on Tuesday that the budget for next year will include increased spending on the defence system, but that the amount, given that Croatia is in the excessive budget deficit procedure, will not reach two percent of GDP, [reports Večernji List](#) on November 22, 2016.

Plenković gave the statement during the second international security conference organized by the Croatian Statehood Foundation and the [Konrad Adenauer Foundation](#) in Croatia. He pointed out that one of the priorities of his government was drafting the new National Security Strategy and the Law on Homeland Security System, in order for Croatia to strengthen its defence capabilities and respond to security threats as a member of NATO and the European Union. "We will strive to demonstrate that fact, within the limits of what is feasible, in the budget for 2017", he said and pointed out that, at the time when Croatia is trying to leave the excessive budget deficit procedure, it was not easy to reach those two percent, which is Croatia's "ambition". "We will try to make certain steps by the end of the term of this government, which will make defence capabilities of Croatia and its general security reach the level of a reliable, efficient and interoperable partner of the international community", said Plenković.

In a statement to reporters after addressing the conference, he confirmed that the defence budget in 2017 would be increased, but added that it was not realistic for it to reach two percent of GDP. "I think that is not realistic at the moment, but we are all aware that we have to make a step forward. The compromise that we will reach will be the first step towards further strengthening of our defence capacities in realistic terms", he said. Plenković did not want to disclose specific figures or percentages, saying that everything would be known after the draft budget is prepared. He stressed the importance of adopting new strategies and new legal framework due to "challenges of migrations and terrorism, which are the issues which we will surely deal with in the years ahead". Pointing out the participation of Croatia in peacekeeping missions around the world, Plenković added that Croatia had transformed its position from a recipient to a provider of security.¹

¹ <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/politics/14958-government-to-increase-defence-budget-for-2017>

Europe needs common security policy, Croatia new one

ZAGREB, Nov 22 (Hina) - Terrorism, the migrant crisis and hybrid warfare, as well as corruption, negative demographic trends and radicalisation are the greatest security threats to Croatia, while the European Union requires a common security policy because today's challenges are transnational, an international security conference heard on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic and German Ambassador to Croatia Thomas Schultze opened the conference, organised by the Croatian Statehood Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Croatia.

One of the government's priorities is to prepare a new National Security Strategy and a Homeland Security Bill, Plenkovic said, adding that the government would try to ensure that this was reflected in the 2017 budget.

Croatia is currently working on exiting the Excessive Budget Deficit procedure, which means that it is difficult for it to allocate 2% of its budget for defence, but will aim at that.

Common borders need to be protected and a common migrant policy is necessary, Schultze underscored and claimed that citizens' trust in the European Union project needs to be restored because if citizens lose their belief in its success, that could jeopardise the "security and stability of Europe and the wider region."

We have to consider their fears and offer solutions. We have to bring Europe closer to them and take account of their sentiments and fears in a constructive and positive manner, Schultze said.

A survey conducted by the European Parliament shows that European citizens consider the fight against terrorism to be a priority for the EU.

Interior Minister Vlaho Orepic said that Croatia has to stand firmly with a single European policy and that Croatia's priority at the moment is to create an ambience of security that is based on the "principles of humanity, solidarity and friendship" as well as "monitoring and protecting, territory, people and good."

Demography expert Stjepan Sterc spoke about migration issues and warned that the United Nations foresees that over the next 30 years about 400 million people will head toward Europe.

Defence Minister Damir Krsticevic said that the problem with Croatia's security system is the poor connections between relevant state institutions and poor exchange of information.

"The government has launched the process of defining and establishing a system of homeland security to offer an overall, coordinated and consistent approach to respond to an entire series of potential security threats," he said.

Plenkovic: Proceedings against MOL's CEO continue

ZAGREB, Nov 22 (Hina) - Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said on Tuesday that he considered Interpol's decision to reject the Croatian request to renew the arrest warrant for the CEO of the Hungarian energy group MOL, Zsolt Hernadi, as technical information, adding that as far as he knew the Croatian judicial authorities were continuing proceedings against MOL's chief.

In 2013 the Zagreb County Court charged Hernadi with giving a EUR 10 million bribe to former Croatian prime minister Ivo Sanader in order for MOL to secure controlling rights over the Croatian oil and gas company INA, but the head of MOL has remained out of reach of the Croatian authorities. MOL has dismissed the charges several times, claiming that he never bribed any politicians or gave any money to acquire controlling rights in INA.

Croatia's request for renewal of the Red Notice for Hernadi was outvoted at a recent Interpol meeting, and his lawyer told the media that Croatia had used Interpol's arrest warrant for political purposes.

"I see the information we have received regarding Interpol as technical information," Plenkovic told reporters in Zagreb after addressing an international security conference organised by the Croatian Statehood Foundation and the **Konrad Adenauer Foundation** in Croatia.

Plenkovic said that to his knowledge, the Croatian judicial authorities were continuing proceedings against Hernadi. "Any existing disputes about this may be resolved as part of cooperation within the EU," he added.

The PM said that one way of resolving this case was for the Zagreb County Court to seek a preliminary opinion of the European Court of Justice. "But those are technical, legal issues. In any case, as far as the Croatian judicial authorities are concerned and to my knowledge, proceedings are continuing and are not politicised," he said, adding that Croatia would also insist on international cooperation mechanisms.

Plenkovic would not comment on the statement by a MOL spokesperson that the Hungarian company would sell its stake in INA if no agreement was reached with the Croatian government, saying that his partner for talks was not the company's spokesman but "someone higher up".

He stressed that it was his government that had arranged a meeting with the INA management for the first time in several years and that Foreign Minister Davor Ivo Stier was in Budapest today.

Plenkovic said that he saw INA as a Croatian strategic oil company, adding that his government was assembling experts from all relevant areas to work out a strategy for INA. "INA is important for our energy security and is one of our most important economic operators, which also has an important social dimension. All these aspects are part of our approach to INA."

Asked if Croatia was interested in buying MOL's stake in INA, Plenkovic said that Croatia was interested in INA becoming a profitable company that would ensure energy security and contribute to employment in Croatia.

Responding to questions from the press, Interior Minister Vlaho Orepic briefly said that Croatia would insist on justice being served in the Hernadi case.



1. Paneldiskussion

PM Plenkovic Confirms Intent to Increase Croatia's Defense Spending

Monday VECERNJI LIST online edition

<http://tinyurl.com/jpkhvbw>

Tuesday JUTARNJI LIST online edition

<http://tinyurl.com/hc45a92>

Tuesday VECERNJI LIST online edition

<http://tinyurl.com/hebz39j>

Tuesday HRT online edition

<http://tinyurl.com/h5m2c8p>

PM Plenkovic confirms that the 2017 Ministry of Defense budget will be larger than in 2016, but that the allocated sum will not be the 2% of the GDP as recommended by NATO. The 2016 defense budget was originally planned at 1.17% of the GDP, but considering higher than expected economic activity the Ministry of Defense budget is actually going to be closer to 1.14% of the GDP.

Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic confirmed on Tuesday at the 2nd Annual International Security Conference in Zagreb that the 2017 Ministry of Defense budget will be larger than in 2016, but that the allocated sum will not reach the 2% of the Gross Domestic Budget (GDP) which is the level recommended by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Croatian media report. Meanwhile, in its Monday edition, VECERNJI LIST unofficial sources say that the planned 2017 Ministry of Defense budget as proposed by Finance Minister Zdravko Maric is HRK 4.65 billion, which is only around HRK 40 million more than in 2016.

Plenkovic commented the issue of the country's contribution to the NATO when opening the 2nd Annual International Security Conference and emphasized that the one of the Government's priorities is to draft a National Security Strategy and Law on Homeland Security, according to which Croatia would improve its defensive capabilities and be able to respond to security threats as a member of NATO and the European Union (EU), HRT reports.

"We will try, within the frame of our capacity, to have these priorities reflected in the 2017 budget, but as Croatia is trying to emerge from the [[European Council's]] Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP), reaching the ambitious 2% is not simple," said Plenkovic. He also assured that an attempt will be made to improve Croatia's defensive capabilities and raise the level of security so that it can be "a reliable, effective and rapid operational partner in the international community," quotes VECERNJI LIST.

Speaking to journalists after the Conference, Plenkovic reiterated that the 2% spending goal is "not realistic at this time" for Croatia, but that a compromise will be the first step towards further improvement in the country's defense capabilities. He declined to specify any concrete numbers until after the final budgetary proposal is ready for debate.

Plenkovic reminded that Croatia is participating in multiple peace keeping missions, and as such has transformed itself from a beneficiary of security to a provider of security for others.

Minister of Defense Damir Krsticevic, who also participated at the Conference, emphasized the importance of reversing the trend of reductions in defense spending, HRT reports. Krsticevic pointed out that a systematic approach is being taken in drafting the new National Security Strategy and security legislation which identifies the national interests and strategic goals, and the threats and risks Croatia faces, the response to those threats and the necessary resources.

"The budget is, clearly, very important and here we want to do the best we can while looking at other sectors as well – we want security for Croatia, and investment in defense is investment in our own security - and I believe that this Government will reverse the negative trends regarding defense spending," claimed Krsticevic. He also reminded that the Ministry of Defense budget in 2008 was HRK 5.2 billion, while the 2015 budget was 26% smaller at HRK 4.2 billion, concludes JUTARNJI LIST.

In its Monday edition, VECERNJI LIST notes that Krsticevic has since his appointment been lobbying "behind closed doors" for an increased budget in 2017. Unofficial sources note that the planned 2017 Ministry of Defense budget as proposed by Finance Minister Zdravko Maric is HRK 4.65 billion, which is only around HRK 40 million more than in 2016. In terms of the GDP, the 2016 defense budget was originally planned at 1.17% of the GDP, but considering higher than expected economic activity, with no corresponding increase in the Ministry of Defense budget, it will now actually be closer to only 1.14% of the GDP, writes VECERNJI LIST.

Krsticevic is an expert in national security, and has emphasized the potential harm of an excessively low defense budget at this time. The election of Donald Trump as the next President of the United States (U.S.) also threatens the unity of NATO, as he suggested during the election campaign that the US would "think twice" about assisting any NATO member state that spends less than 2% of its GDP on defense in the event of an attack.

VECERNJI LIST notes that Plenkovic will have to weigh the national security arguments of Krsticevic against the public finances arguments of Maric. Numerous NATO members have relatively low defense budgets, and the Baltic states, Poland, The Netherlands and Romania have begun to increase their defense spending. The US finances around 70% of the costs of NATO, and Trump will expect European NATO members to increase their combined defense spending (which is currently at around USD 240 billion annually).

Croatia, with less than 1.2% of the GDP allocated to defense, is below the European average together with Albania, Germany, Denmark, The Netherlands and Slovakia, writes VECERNJI LIST. Italy, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Canada all spend a smaller share of their GDP on defense than Croatia, while Slovenia, Spain and Belgium spend only 0.9% of their GDP on defense. The lowest levels of defense spending are posted by Luxemburg (0.4% of its GDP) and Iceland (0.26%).

Only five NATO members spend more than 2% of their GDP on defense: Poland (2.0%), Estonia (2.2%), Great Britain (2.2%), Greece (2.4%) and the US (3.6%).

For Croatia to reach the 2% goal, it would have to spend HRK 2 billion more on defense than it now does, writes VECERNJI LIST. Experts suggest that a 10% increase in the Ministry of Defense budget (HRK 400-500 million) would be sufficient to begin the process of modernization of defense systems.

PM: Defence budget to be raised but not to 2 pct of GDP

ZAGREB, Nov 22 (Hina) - Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said on Tuesday that defence funding would be increased in the 2017 state budget but that they would not amount to 2% of GDP, as recommended by NATO, because Croatia was in the EU's excessive deficit procedure. Speaking at an international security conference in Zagreb, he said one of his cabinet's priorities was to draw up a national security strategy and a homeland security bill so that Croatia could reinforce its defence capability and be able to respond to security threats as a member of NATO and the European Union.

We will try to have that reflected in the 2017 budget but it is not easy to reach 2%, "which is our ambition", when Croatia is trying to come out of the excessive deficit procedure, Plenkovic said. This government will try to raise Croatia's defence capability and security to the level of a reliable, efficient and rapid interoperable partner in the international community, he added. Speaking to reporters after the conference, he confirmed that defence funds would be increased in next year's budget but that it was not realistic to expect the increase to be 2% of GDP. He underlined the importance of adopting a national security strategy and a homeland security law because of the challenges posed by migration and terrorism in the years ahead.

Defence Minister Damir Krsticevic said it was necessary to invest more in defence. We want Croatia to be safe, and investing in defence is investing in the future, he added. He recalled that in 2008 the Defence Ministry budget was HRK 5.2 billion, while this year it was HRK 4.2 billion. He said a systematic approach would be taken in drawing up the national security strategy and the homeland security bill. It is necessary to state the national interests and which strategic goals Croatia wants to achieve, identify the threats Croatian society is faced with and define the response to them, and which resources are necessary, he said.



2. Paneldiskussion